



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1383.0.55.001 - Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, 2008 (Edition 1)

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 17/04/2008

MEDIA RELEASE

April 17, 2008

Embargoed 11.30 am (AEST)

31/2008

Is life in Australia getting better?

The ABS has just released new information to help Australians assess how our society, economy and environment are developing. *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators* gives a snapshot of national progress over the last decade, using key measures. The publication also includes an article on the relationships between society, economy and the environment.

Findings include:

National income and wealth: We're generally richer. Australia's real (i.e. adjusted to remove the effects of inflation) net disposable income per person grew by 2.9%, on average, each year between 1996-97 and 2006-07, reaching \$39,000 in 2006-07. Australia's real net worth rose at an average rate of 0.9% per year between June 1997 and June 2007, reaching over \$254,000 per person in 2007.

Productivity: We're more productive. During the decade 1996-97 to 2006-07 multifactor productivity (the growth in output that can't be explained by growth in labour, capital or other inputs) rose, on average, 1.1% per year.

Work: Fewer people are unemployed. The unemployment rate fell from 8.3% in 1997 to 4.4% in 2007.

Health: We're living longer. A boy born in 2006 could expect to live to 79 (three years longer than a boy born in 1996) while a girl could expect to reach 83 (two years longer than a girl born in 1996).

Education: We're more educated. In 2007 almost 60% of 25-64 year olds had a non-school qualification (e.g. a degree, diploma or certificate), up from 46% in 1997.

Crime: Crime rates are up and down. There was a small increase in the 'personal crime' (assault, sexual assault or robbery) rate between 1998 and 2005, from 4.8% to 5.3%, however the rate of household crimes (break-ins and motor vehicle theft) fell from 9.0% in 1998 to 6.2% in 2005.

Environment: There are more threatened species. The available data suggests some decline in Australia's biodiversity, partly captured in the rise in the number of threatened birds and mammal species. Between 2000 and 2007 the number of bird and mammal species which were extinct, endangered or vulnerable rose from 153 to 174 (up 14%).

More details can be found in *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, 2008* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001).

This page last updated 24 November 2008

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